



PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST IDENTITY THEFT

10 Tips to Help Keep You Protected

Identity thieves rob more than 500,000 Americans every year. According the Federal Trade Commission, Arizona leads in the number of identity theft cases per capita. Recent reports have also shown that there is a direct correlation with the increase of methamphetamine use and the increase of identity theft cases.

The following check list can help you reduce your risk of identity theft:

- ☐ **Request a credit report every four months from one of the three credit bureaus.** You can get one free from each bureau every year. Go to www.annualcreditreport.com. Links to credit bureaus: www.scottsdaleaz.gov/safety/IdentityTheft.asp.
- ☐ **Add your name to the name-deletion lists** of the Direct Marketing Association's Mail Preference Service by sending a check or money order for \$1 (payable to the DMA) and writing to: Direct Marketing Association, PO Box 282, Carmel, NY 10512. You can also do this online at: www.dmaconsumers.org.
- ☐ **Opt-out of credit card and insurance offers** (either permanently or for five years) by calling (888) 567-8688 or go to: www.optoutprescreen.com. This reduces the number of pre-approved credit card offers you receive. Note: they will ask for your social security number to process your request.
- ☐ **Shred old bank and credit statements** as well as "junk mail" credit card offers, before discarding them. Use a crosscut shredder. Cancel unused credit card accounts.
- ☐ **Remove extra credit cards** or other important identity documents from your wallet except when needed.
- ☐ **Photocopy both sides of your driver's license** and credit cards so that you have all the account numbers, expiration dates and phone numbers if your wallet or purse gets stolen.
- ☐ **Mail bill payments and checks at the Post Office.** Avoid putting them in an "out-going" mailbox at home. Checks can be stolen from your mailbox and "washed" with chemicals.
- ☐ **Order your Social Security earnings and benefits statement** once a year to check for fraud. Go to www.ssa.gov
- ☐ **Examine the charges on your credit card statements before paying them.**
- ☐ **Never give your credit card number or personal information over the phone** unless you have initiated the call and trust that business.

For more information on identity theft, including what to do if you are a victim, go to the Northeast Valley Anti-Meth Coalition website at www.StopMethUse.com